

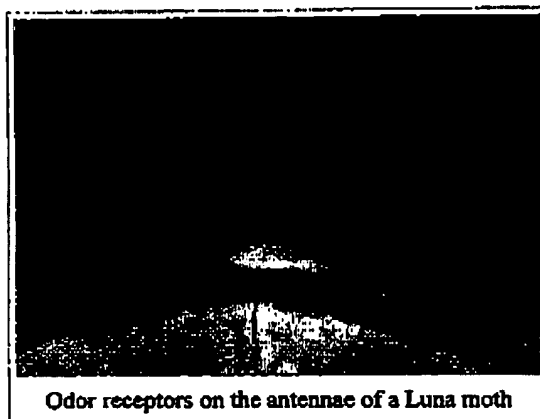
Odor

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(Redirected from Odour)

An **odor** or **odour** (see spelling differences) is a chemical dissolved in air, generally at a very low concentration, which we perceive by the sense of olfaction. Odors are also called **smells**, which can refer to both pleasant and unpleasant odors. In contrast, **stench** and **stink** are used specifically to describe an unpleasant odor. The terms **fragrance**, **scent**, or **aroma** are used primarily by the food and cosmetic industry to describe a pleasant odor, and is sometimes used to refer to perfumes.

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Basics

Odor is a sensation caused by odorant molecules dissolved in air. The widest range of odors consist of organic compounds although some inorganic substances, such as hydrogen sulfide and ammonia, are also odorants. The perception of an odor effect is a two step process. First, there is the physiological part; the sense of the stimulus by receptors in the nose. After that the psychological part follows. The stimuli are processed by the region of the human brain which is responsible for smelling. Because of this a objective and analytical measure of odor is impossible. While odor feelings are very personal perceptions, individual reactions are related to gender, age, state of health and private affectations. Common odors that people are used to, such as their own body odor, are less noticeable to individuals than external or uncommon odors.